



Inclusion Chanukah 12.12.2020

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Note: there has been a change in Cantor Friedman's Perspective article on page 2.

K'lal Yisrael: Our Jewish Unity

By **RABBI RACHEL HEAPS**

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Once upon a time, in a land far away, thousands of Jewish ancestors gathered at the bottom of a mountain and declared “*na’aseh v’nishma*,” “we will do and we will understand.” Or at least that’s how the Torah tells it.

When the Israelites accepted the covenant with God at Mount Sinai, we’re told that they responded with one voice and one mind, communally and consciously deciding the path their future would take. But, if we’re being honest with ourselves, of all the magic, miracles, and mysteries mentioned in Torah – the idea that thousands of people could come together and agree on a single decision seems supernatural.

Judaism and Jewish tradition are big on community. The phrase *K'lal Yisrael*, is often used to refer to the unity of the Jewish people, no matter when or where they live.

There’s something powerful in having a simple, yet powerful, connection to strangers – simply by affirming one’s own Judaism. But *K'lal Yisrael* doesn’t assume that all Jews look, think, speak, practice, or believe alike. *K'lal Yisrael* doesn’t presume that there is only one right way to be Jewish. Rather, *K'lal Yisrael*, acknowledges the difference in each Jewish individual and each Jewish community and declares the commonalities more important than anything else.



At the mountain, the Israelites might have spoken together, but their unified declaration was spoken by countless individuals, each using their own voice and their own understanding to affirm their

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“In short, these articles hammer home an essential aspect of Temple Jeremiah: when you're a part of our community, you are never alone.

By **KATIE BICK**
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For me, 2020 was an isolating year. Due to the global spread of COVID-19, I was unable to celebrate holidays and milestones with my family in Michigan, visit friends from out-of-state, or even experience the joys of Chicago, a city filled with people and opportunities for new connections, the way I had hoped to.

It's hard to avoid the loneliness brought about by the pandemic. Many of you at Temple Jeremiah have told me about missing seeing your neighbors or wishing you could check-in with family in assisted living facilities. We've all been affected by the need for physical distancing, but I've found that Temple Jeremiah's robust sense of community helps to keep feelings of isolation at bay.

Despite these extraordinary circumstances, at Temple Jeremiah members continue to come together and lift one another up. This

issue of The Covenant celebrates stories of unity and togetherness. Inside this issue, you can read about organizations like Hand in Hand and the New Trier Multifaith Alliance bringing people of disparate backgrounds together to celebrate friendship, unity, and their common bonds. We've also shared stories about the impressive efforts Temple Jeremiah members and committees have undertaken to foster a sense of community both within and outside of the temple's walls. Even Cantor Friedman's article discusses connection by virtue of touching on the abstract way religious practice bonds us with those who have come before us.

In short, these articles hammer home an essential aspect of Temple Jeremiah: when you're a part of our community, you are never alone.

Although many of the previous year's challenges will follow us into January, Temple Jeremiah's sense of community makes me optimistic for 2021. Thanks to the empathy, kindness, and dedication of our temple community, no one in our congregation has to feel alone.

"Seeing" as a Cantor: What Cantors Can Do



By **CANTOR SUSIE LEWIS FRIEDMAN**
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The kosher butcher. The mohel. The singer. The synagogue music director. The teacher of children. These were but a few terms which described the very first *Hazzanim* (cantors) at the turn of the century, and the last two have remained constant.

Thank goodness we no longer have to be kosher butchers or mohels! Many of us faint at the sight of our own blood!

Did you know, however, that in the 1st through about the 12th centuries, music and singing were banned from worship? Scholars like Moses Maimonides (the RaMBaM) and others cited instances in the Talmud to support their argument for the absence of prayer music shortly after the fall of the Second Temple to mourn this tragic loss.

Over time, scholars began to see the necessity in appointing someone to literally be a "see-er" - *Hazzan*, to help visualize and allow the worshippers to "see" the prayers being recited. Texts in Mishnah 3 point to this new understanding of music. Proverbs 29:18 also does, saying, "For a lack of *Hazzanim*, people lose

restraint. But happy is one who heeds instruction." Historically, the *Hazzan* provided visual aspects for the congregation by supervising the rituals of the congregation for things such as Shabbat, Holidays, B'nai mitzvah, and rituals for life cycles. In a way, we still do this today!

At the height of Jewish emigration to the United States, one of the greatest community desires was to successfully assimilate. The Reform Movement had temple services on Sundays, and the Music Director began to take place of the *Hazzan*. Chants and davening, the fast-paced Hebrew recitation chanting once chanted by the *Hazzan*, evolved into choral music, and the *Hazzan* began doing what Cantors of Christian churches did, which was to sing the prayers with the choirs at the instruction of the Music Director.

The title of *Hazzan*, or "see-er," seems to fit even more aptly in this very moment of 2020, as we *Hazzanim* are using more and more visual elements where we once would have used only aural ones. Because we are not able to gather in person, we ask our people to make videos of themselves which we either use separately, or string together with other singers to create virtual musical ensembles. When we meet with our B'nai Mitzvah students it is necessary to "see" and use our eyes to the highest degrees possible to ensure they are chanting successfully, holding the yad over the Hebrew words as they chant. In addition to ensuring the

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beauty of the music aurally, we also are now instructed to do it visually.

My area colleagues and I have been hard at work during this time trying to use this new medium of music to help our community. On September 12th, I participated in an event for the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Educational Center with some cantorial colleagues and members of Brightstar Church. Together, we sang Laurie Akers' song, "Stand Strong." To view the performance, visit: tinyurl.com/CantorsSingStandStrong.

I also used visual media to connect this fall, when Rabbi Cohen and I participated in a Rosh HaShanah video project with Kol Zimrah Jewish Community Singers, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, and clergy from a dozen congregations across the Chicagoland area. The video featured a performance of *Hayom T'amtzeinu*, a prayer composed by Noah Aronson with English lyrics by Ben Tisser. To view the performance, visit: tinyurl.com/HayomTamtzeinuCommunityChorus.

Worship in the Reform Movement is very accessible, with English

readings, contemporary music, and other elements that bring us comfort. You may have noticed over time that we have begun to add a few more elements of Hebrew, sung in the melody or mode which tells us where we are in the calendar. We use these elements to punctuate the opening and closing lines of the prayers, and it's called "davening" which means "praying" in Yiddish. One of the reasons I love to daven the Hebrew text is because it literally gives me a feeling of connection to its origins. It is hard to explain, but I feel something so deeply in my kishkes when I'm praying in that way. I feel like I'm an extension of those amazing cantors who came before me, and that we are all just kind of holding hands with the Divine.

No matter how adept we might become with our current worship during COVID, one thing still remains: I need my hugs. And for me, singing in person, side by side, hearing the voices of my colleagues and other singers live and in person will always be my preference. As always, we are here for you and anxiously await the time when we can safely gather together in person in song. I'm sending you peace and love.

Jewish Child & Family Services (JCFS) has a synagogue liaison at Temple Jeremiah!

DAWN LEVIN IS AVAILABLE TO:

- Provide a listening ear
- Support congregants with individual or family concerns
- Assist with crisis management
- Refer individuals and families to mental health and social service resources within JCFS and in the general community

Dawn can be reached at 847.745.5450 or dawnlevin@jcfs.org

Weekly Torah Portions

We invite you to join us on Saturday mornings to discuss the Torah portion and how it might apply to our lives. We meet virtually at 9:30 a.m. every Saturday. To join us on Zoom, visit zoom.us/j/132889355.



January 2, 2021	Vayechi	Genesis 47:28 – 50:26
January 9, 2020	Shemot	Exodus 1:1 – 6:1
January 16 2020	Vaera	Exodus 6:2 – 9:35
January 23, 2020	Bo	Exodus 10:1 – 13:1

Candy and Community Service: Michael Greenberg's Big Heart



Michael Greenberg

By **MICHAEL SHMARAK**
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You can't spell candy without "can." Here is how one Temple Jeremiah member took that reminder - and other lessons - to heart.

"TRICK OR TREAT!"

Ever since we were kids, we waited for October 31st to show up on the calendar. We thought about what our costume would be. We researched which neighborhoods had historically given out large candy bars over bite-sized versions. Halloween was a big deal.

Halloween 2020 wasn't the big deal we all had hoped for. COVID-19 forced many of us to rethink what this annual tradition would look and feel like.

To be sure, some Temple Jeremiah families were really inventive about their Halloween approach. We heard stories about people creating candy chutes that ran from their home to the front porch. We also heard about people who tried slingshotting candy to the street (we have no pictures but wonder if candy broke any windows).

TRICK...

Unfortunately, a lot of families could not celebrate Halloween because they have struggled to put food on their tables since the pandemic began. Michael Greenberg, a local dermatologist and long-time Temple Jeremiah member, aligned Halloween with Jewish thought to create something different, and in turn, make a difference.

With "Candy and A Can," Michael put out a call on social media platforms and with friends for kids to not only collect candy this year, but at least half a dozen cans of food for area food pantries. It is such an easy ask, but one that made such a difference. Numerous businesses and families jumped on-board (check out the segment he did on WGN-TV).

During this time of unprecedented loss, Michael said it falls on all of us to feed those who may otherwise go without.

"I can't solve the political problems in America, I can't solve the COVID problem, but I can help in one tiny way. If I can help one family eat this year, I feel I've done something good," he said. Having spoken with him while he was at the office, we learned he wears a lot of different hats. Doctor. Podcaster. Improviser. Temple Jeremiah member. Family man. Now, add Mensch to the list.

"A number of years ago, I had an idea. Kids have too much candy in their diets. What if kids collected cans of food to help support a food pantry? They could go with Mom and Dad to a food pantry. They could buy cans of food at a store and bring them to people who could use them. It extends the meaning of Halloween and the love of giving."

...OR TREAT!

While Michael kept that idea in his head for a long time, he brought it out during a time of great need.

"Temple Jeremiah has a long-standing history of social justice and helping food pantries, but we all could be doing so much more," he explained. "We learn from our Jewish education to love one another. Honor your father and your mother. Treat your brother as you would yourself. Now more than ever, we need to look at ourselves and one another through different lenses, as there are different meanings for everything.

"We all have a common mother - the earth. We all have a common father - God. We need to view each other as brothers and sisters in a global family."

Michael isn't planning on sitting on the sidelines with this idea. This year, he is introducing the concept for his family's Chanukah celebrations. Overall, Michael wants us all to think: what if each of us converted gift-giving holidays into changes to give back to others?

When you look at the world through Michael's view, you see a very different meaning of "TRICK OR TREAT," as it channels a deeper spiritual truth - both for this year and for years to come.

Stay Up to Date on Events with our Calendar
Looking to learn more about upcoming events at Temple Jeremiah?

For up-to-date programming and our full calendar,
visit tinyurl.com/tj-calendar.

Rabbi Rachel Heaps (continued from page 1)

connection to God and to one another. They experienced something truly awe-some and

found that it brought them together. When was the last time we experienced something that brought us together, rather than pushing us apart?

This past year we've spent more time than ever physically farther and ideologically further than ever. We've been searching for something that unites us again. Something powerful enough to inspire us to respond, once more, to affirm our community. And we've been looking for a moment as epic as the scene at Sinai.

But, to me, the most compelling aspect of Sinai isn't in the thunder and lightning covering the peak, nor did it come from the voice of God echoing down to earth. When I read the story of our ancestors I don't hear the story of a divine miracle, I hear the story of a distinctly human one. I don't hear the story of a time when everyone decided the same thing at the same time. I hear the story of a time when all of those individual and unique voices learned to sing in harmony, not unison.

Our tradition tells us that each person understands Torah in their own way, and accepts the covenant according to their own ability. Our ancestors created *K'lal Yisrael* by acknowledging everyone's

unique experiences and affirming that each experience is an essential part of a greater whole. For them, and for us, unity comes through affirming that everyone has a place in the community, without having to change who they are. A community of individuals is stronger and lasts longer than a community of clones.

“When I read the story of our ancestors I don't hear the story of a divine miracle, I hear the story of a distinctly human one.”

If we've learned nothing else over the last year, we've learned that we can all have unique experiences in the safety of our own homes and families and remain strong as a community.

No matter what has happened this past year or will happen in the year to come we are still *K'lal Yisrael*, as strong as we were when we stood together at Sinai. Being *K'lal Yisrael* means that we bring our own understandings, abilities, and experiences to our community and have them be accepted and celebrated. We find our unity in our variety and build the foundation of our covenant upon it.

Don't Let the Light Go Out: The Story of Our *Ner Tamid*

Since the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, it has been the custom that an eternal light, or *ner tamid*, shines in the sanctuary of every synagogue. For those unfamiliar with synagogue symbolism, this light represents God's constant presence in the synagogue and references the light God commanded Moses to include in the Tabernacle.



Temple Jeremiah's Eternal Light

In Temple Jeremiah's Schreiber Sanctuary, it's hard to miss our eternal light. The light, which shines above our ark, is made of blue, red, and orange glass crafted into the shape of a flame. However, this iconic light is a relatively new addition to Temple Jeremiah. As a replacement eternal light that capped off our 2009 redesign of the Schreiber Sanctuary, the light has a fraught history

that features a construction accident, a renowned, New York-based artist, and hard work from Temple Jeremiah's members.

THE ACCIDENT DURING RENOVATION

In 2009, Temple Jeremiah undertook a major sanctuary renovation

project. Thanks to a generous donation from the Slotnik family, almost everything about the then nearly 40-year old space was going to be redone. "Our old configuration just wasn't working," said Julie Ford, former Temple Jeremiah president and chair of the sanctuary redesign project. "Our sanctuary was designed in the 70's, so we wanted to update the space." This update included redesigning the bima, adding new paneling, and closing off skylights while maintaining core sanctuary fixtures like the ark and the eternal light.

To carry out these renovations, Temple Jeremiah hired Steve Blinderman, a member and general contractor whose team had already handled several redesign projects for the temple. "I was excited to do more work for Temple Jeremiah," said Steve. "As a congregant, I take pride in the temple. It felt great to help the congregation with my skill set."

However, Steve noted that the renovation project came with some challenges. "One of our big concerns during the renovation project was keeping the sanctuary usable for worship and b'nai mitzvah services," said Steve. To achieve this, Steve and his team would work during the week, then remove their tools, scaffolding, and contracting supplies before Shabbat every Friday.

Another challenge was protecting remaining sanctuary fixtures during construction.

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“Although we were doing a near-total reconfiguration of the space, we had to work around the existing conditions of the ark and the eternal light.” During every step of the construction process, Steve cautioned his construction team to be careful around the eternal light. However, despite the safety precautions in place, a piece of construction equipment bumped into the eternal light. Upon contact, the eternal light cracked.

“In short,” said Steve, “we shattered one of the holiest pieces in the sanctuary. It was not our proudest moment.”

THE SHATTERED ETERNAL LIGHT

When asked to describe Temple Jeremiah’s old eternal light, honeycomb was the first word that came to Julie Ford’s mind. “It was cross-woven, ceramic oval,” said Julie.

“It was a little like an egg or a pendant,” Steve confirmed. “A lightbulb was swathed in the center, and light came out through slats in the fixture’s lattice structure.”

Steve and his crew gathered the pieces of the eternal light. After realizing that the light was unable to be repaired, the Temple Jeremiah community immediately began problem-solving: Steve ran from store to store searching for a temporary replacement light replacement, or, as he put it “a not so eternal light.” At the same time, Julie gathered a committee to find a long-term replacement.

While Steve was able to find a suitable, stand-in light in time for the weekend’s Shabbat services, it took the newly formed Eternal Light Committee longer to find a permanent ner tamid.

“There was a hidden opportunity in the accident,” said Julie. “Out of necessity, we could now find an eternal light that matched our new sanctuary decor. However, it also created a new challenge for us: we had to completely reimagine and redesign the eternal light.”

FINDING OUR NEW ETERNAL LIGHT

To find a replacement light, Temple Jeremiah’s Eternal Light Committee began a national search of Judaica vendors and designers. Eventually, the team found New York-based sculptor David Klass, who, in addition to having pieces in the Metropolitan

Museum of Art, boasts a 40-year history of creating liturgical work for Jewish institutions.

According to David, objects like eternal lights serve as both spiritual pieces of art and functional objects. “I use my background in and knowledge of Judaism and my skills and expertise in architecture and fine art to design and fabricate unique artwork,” said Klass. “My art is designed to enrich the experience of Jewish tradition.”

Temple Jeremiah was drawn to David Klass by the unique shapes of eternal lights in his portfolio. While many eternal light designers craft lights that resemble orbs or chandeliers, David’s work resembled flames. “We were interested in his creativity,” said Julie. “His lights were beautiful and contemporary.”

The Eternal Light Committee commissioned Klass to create a custom piece for the temple. According to Julie, the light was designed to complement the stained glass in the sanctuary and provide a sense of reverent flickering. The light is also deliberately colorful. “We wanted the light to look like a lively flame,” said Julie. “We asked David to incorporate blues, oranges, and reds into the piece, representing the temperature of a flame.”

REFLECTING ON THE ETERNAL LIGHT

Once the piece was completed, it became the finishing touch in the sanctuary renovation. Now, the eternal light is the focal point of the synagogue. The eternal light also now holds special meaning for those involved in its replacement.

“The eternal light is much more meaningful to me now,” said Steve. “Before the accident, the eternal light was just an aspect of the synagogue to me. With all the work that went into replacing the light, however, its symbolism speaks to me. When I sit in the sanctuary, I am very proud of how the project turned out.”

“To me, our eternal light is a spark of God,” said Julie, echoing Steve’s sentiment. “I think having something more symbolic of a flame as our eternal light hit home with people, including myself. When I see the eternal light burning above the ark, I’m reminded both that the eternal light is a flame guiding Jews home and that the home of the synagogue is the sanctuary.”



IAC Israel Fun Fact:

Did you know...

With more than 3,000 tech companies and start-ups, Israel has the highest concentration of tech companies in the world (outside of Silicon Valley).

Traveling “Hand in Hand” Towards a Unified Future

In early November, Temple Jeremiah clergy and members were invited to attend an informational seminar on Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education. Hand in Hand, an educational nonprofit based in Israel, is dedicated to building an inclusive, shared Israeli society through a network of integrated, bilingual schools and active communities for Arabs and Jews.

Hand in Hand began twenty years ago with a single school of 55 students and has since grown to become the largest integrated school network in Israel, with roughly 2,000 students across six schools. From struggling to attract students when they started out, Hand in Hand now has a waitlist of over 1,000 children. Two Arab members of the Knesset send their kids to Hand in Hand schools and the organization has attracted high-profile supporters internationally, including Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

At the webinar in November, Hand in Hand compiled a panel to speak about the organization featuring Noa Yammer, Hand in Hand’s Director of International Communications, Shada Edris Mansour, a Hand in Hand parent as well as the organization’s Deputy Director of Communications, and Maayan Goldhirsh, a Hand in Hand parent and active community member.

The panel discussed the value of integrated schools and the necessity of equality and mutual respect. “Hand in Hand offers my children a quality education while breaking down barriers,” said Shada, “Growing up, I didn’t have Jewish friends. Now both I and my children do. With Hand in Hand, I’ve gained the opportunity for community.”

Maayan echoed this sentiment. “I live only twenty minutes away from Shada, but without Hand in Hand we would have never met. Arab citizens were never present in my conversations about peace or cross-culturalism. Hand in Hand affords me cherished friends who can broaden these discussions.”

Both parents also stressed the importance of Hand in Hand’s multicultural curriculum, and Maayan even cited it as her reason for enrolling her children in a Hand in Hand school.

While many of Israel’s schools are segregated among Arabs and Jews, Maayan worried going to an all white, Jewish school would deny her children a well-rounded understanding of Israel’s diverse, complex culture. “We live in a country of Jews and of Arabs,” said Maayan. “I wanted my children to appreciate that diversity and the values that accompany it. Every day I see how Hand in Hand teaches my children to become more open, more tolerant, and more ready to see issues big and small from others’ perspectives.”



For Shada, the personal implications of integration are just as important as the political ones: “I see my daughter’s eyes sparkle when she plays with her Jewish friends. Her friendships are important to her and powerful to me.”

Over the next ten years, Hand in Hand aims to create a network of up to 10-15 integrated bilingual schools, supported and enhanced by active communities, involving thousands of Israeli citizens.

According to Lee Gordon, Hand in Hand’s Co-Founder, the schools are a symbol of hope in a divided nation. “We are helping build peace, partnership, and coexistence in Israel,” said Lee. “I like to think we provide optimism in a place where this conflict has gone on for so long. Hand in Hand is a model of everything Israel could be.”

To learn more about Hand in Hand, including what American citizens can do to remotely support Hand in Hand schools, please visit handinhandk12.org.

Sisterhood Book Club

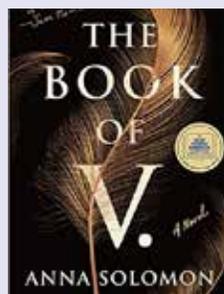
NOTE: We will be meeting through Zoom! Join us online at zoom.us/j/3417454169.

Thursday, January 14, 2021 ~ 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
The Convert, By Stefan Hertmans



Historical fiction takes us to 11th Century France, an aristocratic noblewoman, a Rabbi’s son, romance, love, antisemitism, the Crusades... will they escape it all? Based on information from the Cairo Geniza this fascinating story will carry you away!

Thursday, February 11, 2021 ~ 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
The Book of V., By Anna Solomon



Esther in Ancient Persia meets her counterpart in 2016, and again in Watergate-era in a “highly readable, darkly sexy... novel...a meditation on female power and powerlessness, the stories told about women and the ones we tell about and to ourselves.” —The New York Times Book Review

COVID-19: Expert Snapshots From 2020

By **DR. CORY FRANKLIN**

Former Intensive Care Physician
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I was asked to write an article about the status of the COVID pandemic and some advice for Temple Jeremiah members. I thought it might be interesting to provide some temporal perspective, so I have included excerpts from columns I wrote at different times during the pandemic. Notice how the advice hasn't really changed.

MARCH

As Chicago institutes measures to control the coronavirus pandemic, many questions have arisen about what we can do — individually, by public officials, and the medical community — to keep ourselves safe.

While aggressive approaches such as closing public venues, limiting meetings, and canceling parades will cause significant economic disruption, lives will be saved in two ways: fewer new cases, especially among those at highest risk, and surges of cases will be blunted, diminishing the possibility of overwhelming the health care system.

On a personal level: avoid crowds; work from home if possible; if you are in a high-risk group, have others do your grocery shopping; wash your hands frequently (soap and water for at least 20 seconds), disinfect frequently touched surfaces with wipes or sprays, and use alcohol hand gel.

Surgical masks work. They shield from the respiratory droplets that spread COVID-19, which can travel six feet through the air, the basis for social distancing recommendations.

SEPTEMBER

Here are four factors crucial to COVID spread, certainly not the only four, nor absolutely determinant, and not completely independent variables.

Population: More people, more hosts for the virus, more cases. The U.S. has the third highest population in the world. Of the eight countries with the most COVID cases, five are among the top 10 most populous countries in the world (U.S., India, Brazil, Russia, and Mexico).

Country Size: COVID is basically a regional disease. As such, it is harder to eradicate viral spread nationwide in a larger country because new outbreaks can arise anywhere. The US is fourth in the world in land mass. Five of the world's top ten countries by area are also in the top ten by COVID cases (US, India, Brazil, Russia and Argentina).

Mobility: More travel, more spread of the virus. Mobility is hard to measure directly, but according to the Washington Post, the U.S. is the number one country in the world in terms of domestic mobility and travel.

Diversity: There is a genetic component to viral spread. A more diverse country has a greater chance that some of its population will demonstrate resistance to infection and also more susceptible people with less immunity. According to the Pew Research Center, the U.S. is more diverse than most Western European or Asian countries but less diverse than Canada, Brazil, Mexico or most African countries.

In summary, the United States is at or near the top of the world in population, area, and mobility, and more diverse than most industrialized countries. No other country has a similar profile. This might be why the United States' COVID-19 are so different than those of other countries.

NOVEMBER

We are now on the verge of a great 21st century medical achievement - the COVID-19 vaccine. The early trial results of a vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech are encouraging - 90% of vaccine recipients were protected from becoming ill with COVID-19, with no reports of serious toxicity. Many details, especially the duration of protection, still need review but 90% is considered extremely successful.

We are currently in the steep uphill curve of the third and most dangerous wave of COVID-19, with more people hospitalized than at any time during the pandemic. Illinois has the highest 10-day average of new cases of any state in the country, and nationally there are over 11 million total COVID cases and 250,000 deaths.

Public acceptance of a vaccine is essential. Some people balk at vaccines; childhood vaccination rates have not been universal even in affluent areas. When the public has turned away from effective vaccines, children have suffered unnecessarily.

The winter months will be difficult with the prospect of huge numbers of community-acquired infection and overloaded hospitals. Mask wearing and social distancing remain essential and even more important during this time of massive community spread. These mitigation measures also provide value-added protection from flu, colds, and other respiratory viruses. Widespread masking is a small concession for phased increases of in-person schooling and fewer restrictions on a variety of businesses, industries, and sports. It is certainly preferable to tight lockdown.

Does a vaccine mean we are close to stopping the pandemic? Not in the short run. But the critical message is that a viable vaccine can be developed. As Winston Churchill told Parliament after the first successful defeat of the German army in World War II following the North African campaign, "This is not the end. This is not even the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps the end of the beginning."

Reflecting on Sisterhood at Temple Jeremiah



Alisa Patterson and her family

By **ALISA PATTERSON**
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This past weekend I had the privilege of watching my daughter, Aimee, receive her Master's Degree in Nursing at her virtual graduation ceremony. We watched the video with her while she Zoomed with her

friends. I was struck by their enthusiasm, laughter, and excitement as I listened to Aimee and her four closest friends talk about their future plans. These brave young women are eager to enter the workforce, armed with optimism, hope, and determination to make a difference in this world in their own seemingly "small," yet incredibly "large," way. Heroic in their willingness to jump in with both feet and do whatever needs to be done.

With the backdrop of our recent election resulting in the first female Vice President of the United States, I reflected on the significance of this event and the way it has energized women. It reminded me of the work so many women at Temple Jeremiah have been doing these past few months. As de facto members of our Sisterhood, their seemingly "small" deeds beget decidedly "large" and meaningful impacts. I have had the privilege of working with them as they humbly, yet doggedly, perform acts of volunteerism, activism and heroism that inspire all of us. Their leadership allows the rest of us to be our best selves as we help, feed, volunteer, and feel the satisfaction in knowing that our "small" deeds make a difference too.

On October 4th the social justice team including: Lori Ruskin, Dana Garbarski, Jack Craven and Barb Miller organized a Backpack Blessings program that made a record 930 meals which fed 70 families for three months. Tables were set up outside, volunteers were masked and socially distanced as many families turned up to answer the call for help from the Social Justice Committee and Sisterhood.

I was deeply moved when I saw so many mothers and children arrive to help, while concurrently watching the bags and bags of pre-packed lunches being dropped off at the front of the Temple for the Feed the Hungry program. I know first-hand how many women encouraged their families to participate in these events. Barb Miller shared, "Normally we pack around 200 meals per packing. Three pallets of food were delivered from the Northern Illinois Food Bank, weighing thousands of pounds. It took over 40 volunteers to unload the pallets, set up the tables, pack the meals and then deliver them to the school. Thank you to Sisterhood. We could not do this without your support!"

Cheri Grossman and Randi Mayer organized the JCFS holiday gift

drive. When I asked Randi, our Sisterhood Board Representative, about her involvement she said "It feels wonderful to know that you have helped make a child's holiday special!"

“These “ordinary” women of Jeremiah’s Sisterhood are actually extraordinary in both their deeds and their attitude. Each “small” act has a monumental effect for the recipients of that act. It provides a constant source of hope, opportunity, friendship, and connection.

Cheri, an active Sisterhood, Membership and JCFS volunteer has organized the JCFS holiday drive for the past several years. "The JCFS Wish Tag program has always been a meaningful way to give back during the holidays. While in-person shopping is discouraged, there are over 500 children with wish lists to fulfill. I love how JCFS pivoted to an online giving program and I knew the Temple Jeremiah community would support the effort. No one is untouched by the pandemic, though some are struggling more than others. I look forward to 2021's program when we all can be shopping in stores to fulfill wish lists for JCFS clients."

Vicki Siegelman, who heads up our robust Sisterhood Book Club said "We think of reading as a tool to learn or gather information. But an equally important reason we read is to lose ourselves, to escape into another time or place and Book Club is a good place to get together and do this." It's a great way to safely socialize and stay connected during this time of physical distancing.

Nancy Eisenberg inspired a massive wave of activism by coordinating postcard writing to get out the vote this past election. "It was very gratifying for me to have a way to help people have their voices heard in the 2020 election. Since we were so limited in how we could do that during the pandemic, it was really gratifying to have so many people respond to the TJ Postcard Collective. We made a difference!"

These "ordinary" women of Jeremiah's Sisterhood are actually extraordinary in both their deeds and their attitude. Each "small" act has a monumental effect for the recipients of that act. It provides a constant source of hope, opportunity, friendship and connection.

Lisa and I are both so proud to co-chair Temple Jeremiah's Sisterhood. As a reminder, all women at Temple Jeremiah are part of our Sisterhood. We are always looking for new ideas to keep us connected and we are happy to hear from you with your suggestions and feedback. Feel free to share any ideas you have with Alisa Patterson at sarap124@aol.com or Lisa Schurgin at lbjs2@yahoo.com.

Adult Learning's New and Old Programs During COVID-19

By **JILL ODZER**

Adult Learning Committee Chair
jillodzer@yahoo.com

Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, Adult Learning continues to be an essential part of Temple Jeremiah's calendar. We're incredibly lucky to have Temple Jeremiah's clergy, teachers, and experts leading our Adult Learning sessions every week. We also applaud their dedication to seeking and facilitating new insights in their sessions with all of us.

For those who don't already know, every Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m. Temple Jeremiah hosts a Torah Study. Following that, every Monday morning at 9:30 a.m., we have a drop-in discussion about current events, Jewish life, and general interest topics.

This winter, Temple Jeremiah is also excited to introduce a new Adult Learning program: Living Judaism, which will be run in conjunction with the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning. Beginning Tuesday, February 2nd, this program will take the form of six-week classes offering comprehensive exploration of

Jewish thought, practice, ethics, and history. This program, taught by Rabbi Cohen and Rabbi Heaps, will take place entirely over Zoom.

Overall, we know that COVID-19 has been difficult for everyone at the temple. However, a small silver lining to all the turmoil of social distancing has been Adult Learning's ability to broaden our offerings outside of the physical space of Temple Jeremiah. With joint programs, like the one with the Melton School, we've been able to work with more groups and explore more facets of the Jewish experience than the ones traditionally available to us.

With this in mind, we invite you to stay up to date on our Adult Learning program and to tune in to our events when they interest you! We also would love for you to share interesting Jewish learning opportunities you've heard about with us. We're always excited to add fun, educational events to our calendar!

If you have any questions about Adult Learning during COVID-19 or if you would like to share outside Adult Learning opportunities with us, please contact me, Jill Odzer, at jillodzer@yahoo.com.

Checking in with Temple Jeremiah's Inclusion Committee

By **CAREN BROWN AND GAIL MODRO**

Inclusion Committee Chairs
ceb994@gmail.com and gailmodro@comcast.net

COVID-19 restrictions have been hard for everyone, but especially difficult for families living with a child or adult with special needs whose specific programs have been cancelled or are online only. It has been even harder on families whose loved one with disabilities lives in a residential facility. Some of those families have been unable to visit their loved ones indoors. Some have been able to visit, but only sporadically. Some families can bring their loved one home, but only for a limited time after following strict regulations. Temple Jeremiah's community and clergy continue to be available for support and comfort during these difficult times.

Meanwhile, the Inclusion Committee has continued to try to engage with these families, to bring people together for celebrating Jewish holidays, and to meaningfully connect through inclusive activities. Here's what the Inclusion Committee has been up to since March:

In June we held our first-ever virtual bingo game via Zoom. It was well-attended and lots of prizes were given out. This event was so well liked that we did it again in August, and this time even more people joined us for bingo!

In September we produced a digital, inclusive Rosh Hashanah service with the help of the clergy and several families. Clergy members led us in prayers and a story, while the families provided us with videos of themselves lighting candles, reciting the *shema*, *kiddush*, and *hamotzi*. It was beautiful and meaningful for all.

The Rosh Hashanah video was later posted on Temple Jeremiah's Facebook page and is available to watch here: tinyurl.com/InclusionRoshHaShanah2020.

Another highlight of the holiday was our distribution of holiday gift bags to families with special treats. This was a big hit!

On December 12th, we hosted a Chanukah Celebration via Zoom. It included lighting menorahs at homes simultaneously, singing Chanukah songs, a story, and a digital Chanukah Hunt (similar to a scavenger hunt). Once again, we distributed special gift bags to help families celebrate the holiday with us from their own homes.

For Jewish Disabilities Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) in February, the Inclusion Committee will be hosting a weekend of events with our guest speaker, Pamela Rae Schuller, a well-known comedian and speaker on disability awareness. She will offer introductory remarks on Friday, February 12th during Shabbat services, perform a one hour show via Zoom on Saturday, February 13th, and engage with teens via Zoom on Sunday, February 14th. Watch for announcements coming soon!

The Inclusion Committee is still meeting via Zoom to plan events and stay connected with one another. Our members have also been involved in preparing and bringing gift bags to individual homes. We hope to resume in-person events as soon as it is possible. If you know of any families who might benefit from our programs, please reach out to us. If you have ideas for the Inclusion Committee or would like to join us, feel free to contact co-chairs Caren Brown at ceb994@gmail.com and Gail Modro at gailmodro@comcast.net.

Antiracism Programming



In response to the growing national conversation about racism and institutionalized inequality, Temple Jeremiah has designed a series of antiracism programming for the coming year.

WE INVITE YOU TO ATTEND THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

Unpacking *So You Want to Talk about Race* with Dana Garbarski and Jill Patano. Join us on **Sunday, February 21st from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.** for a discussion of Ijeoma Oluo's *So You Want to Talk about Race* led by Dana Garbarski, Temple Jeremiah member and Associate Professor of Sociology at Loyola, and Jill Patano, Temple Jeremiah member and licensed clinical professional counselor.

How to Talk To Your Child About Race with Jena Doolas. Join us on **Sunday, March 14th from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.** as we welcome educator and antiracism workshop facilitator Jena Doolas for a session on talking about race and racism with children. Both parents and children are encouraged to attend this event.

To learn about our antiracism programming, visit: templejeremiah.org/antiracism-programming.

**Together We Can.
End Systemic Racism.**

Repair the world - Tikkun Olam



"What can I do to fight racism?" For all of us, for any of us, it starts at home. Join Temple Jeremiah in asserting the importance of antiracism by displaying an antiracism lawn sign. To show our support for antiracism, Temple Jeremiah has created an 18" x 24" lawn sign reading:

Together We Can. End Systemic Racism. Repair the world - Tikkun Olam.

Signs cost only \$18. Order yours at tinyurl.com/AntiracismLawnSigns.

Donate to Temple Jeremiah

Making a donation to Temple Jeremiah is a wonderful way to honor a friend or family member on their happy occasion or to memorialize a loved one. You can make a donation in two easy ways:

1. Click on "Make a Donation" at templejeremiah.org or visit the Member Login section and click on "Donate" to donate online via credit card or ACH/eCheck.
2. Mail a check to Temple Jeremiah, 937 Happ Road, Northfield, IL, 60093. Be sure to include a note as to what the donation is for and which fund you prefer.

* Please note that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) gives additional tax advantages to those making cash donations to the temple in 2020. For those who do not itemize, an "above the line" deduction up to \$300 may be claimed. If you do itemize, this year you may be able to deduct charitable contributions equal to as much as 100 percent of AGI. (Consult your tax advisor for details and specific rules about what constitutes qualified contributions.)

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Discretionary Funds: Rabbi Paul F. Cohen • Rabbi Rachel L. Heaps • Cantor Susan Lewis Friedman



Feed the Hungry 12.6.2020



NTMFA Choir featuring TJ Members at NTMFA Interfaith Thanksgiving 2020

Send Us Your Home Photos!



TYPICALLY we showcase activities and events happening lately around Temple Jeremiah on a full page. While the physical building is not filled with everyone's smiling faces, we know the warmth and connections amongst our congregation still exist. How about taking a photo of what's going on at home as you stay in touch with Temple Jeremiah? We'd love to see you celebrating Shabbat, your kids interacting online with youth events, or the challah that you baked. Please send your pictures our way so we can continue filling these pages with the images that remind us all what a wonderful, vibrant, and caring community we have created.

Email your photos to:
covenant@templejeremiah.org



The Silvers, Chanukah



Sophia & Rebecca Vorona, Chanukah



Dina & Raydon Bauwens, Chanukah



The Franks, Chanukah



Vicki Siegelman & David Baldwin performing on Shabbat 12.11.2020



IAC Digital Israel Tour with guide Uri Feinberg 12.14.2020

IN SUPPORT OF

Barbara and Stephen Miller
-Temple Jeremiah Executive Committee

IN APPRECIATION OF

High Holy Days
-Evelyn and Henry Neu

IN HONOR OF

Sydney Blair Acker
Granddaughter of Cantor Amy Zussman and David Fell, *on the occasion of her birth*
-Alene Frost
-Emmy and Ed Rothschild
-Bonnie Sorkin and Peter Alexander

Shamir Burg
Grandson of Phyllis Burg, *on the occasion of him becoming a Bar Mitzvah*
-Ros Wolfe

Danny Glassman
On the occasion of his 8th anniversary at Temple Jeremiah
-Drew Davis

Diane and Mark Gluskin
On the occasion of their special birthdays
-Diane and Mark Gluskin

Deborah and Stuart Katz
On the occasion of their 20th wedding anniversary and vow renewal
-Deborah and Stuart Katz

Jack Jacobson
Son of Amanda and Peter Jacobson
-Amanda and Peter Jacobson

London Jones
Grandson of Susan and Sheldon Isenberg, *on the occasion of him becoming a Bar Mitzvah*
-Karen and David Jones

Felisse and Eric Sigurdson and Family
-Judith Kotick

IN MEMORY OF

Richard Abelson
Father of Debra Abelson
-The Abelson Family
-Susie and Roger Fein

Charlotte and Nathan Ander
Grandparents of Dan Vorona
-Jane Ander

Mildred Atkins
Mother of Ed Atkins
-Sheila Schlaggar

Florence Berg
-The Family of Florence Berg
-Joan Golder
-Emmy and Ed Rothschild
-Marcie Segall
-Renee Zussman

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Sister of Michael Mitzen
-Steven Christenholz

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-Diana Kaufmann
-Susan and Ken Lorch
-Barbara and Stephen Miller

Julia Dowdle
Mother of Julie Rogers
-Caren Brown

Sol Feinberg
Father of Ellen Toban
-Ellen and Alan Toban

Ruth Ferdman
Mother of Seymour Ferdman
-Seymour Ferdman

Paul Fishman
Father of Bill Fishman
-Carole and Bill Fishman

Sam Goldman
Husband of Bobbie Goldman
-Jeanne and Gabe Angres
-Howard Brenner
-Susie and Roger Fein
-Carol and David Golder
-Joan Golder
-Kay and Bart Gordon
-Judy Homer
-Bonnie and Herb Horn
-Sue and Joel Kaufmann
-Susan and Ken Lorch
-Carol Maxon
-Sue Pinsky Gardner and Phil Gardner
-Debora and Michael Pinzur
-Sheila Schlaggar

Arnold Green
Father of Stuart Green
-Janine and Stuart Green

Howard B. Hirschfield
Brother of Allen Hirschfield, uncle of Jill Meltzer
-Nancy and Allen Hirschfield

Nathan Kamensky
Stepfather of Ellen Toban
-Ellen and Alan Toban

Leonard Kaplan
Cousin of Ellen Toban
-Ellen and Alan Toban

Marian Kleiman Katz
Mother of Steve Kleiman
-Renee Zussman

Clara Lieberman
Mother of Carol Fishbain
-Carol and Arnie Fishbain

Lillian Liebman
Mother of Marty Liebman, grandmother of Adam Liebman and Stephanie Schoenberg
-The Liebman and Schoenberg Families

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Father of John Maeglin
-Debra and Joseph Marks
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-Dianne and Joel Rovner
-Babette and Jeffrey Sanders
-Mark Simon

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Husband of Juliet Pomerantz
-Sarah and Erick Weingart

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Stepfather of Vicki Stoller
-Lori and Gary Kash

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Father of Sybil Stern
-Sybil and Larry Stern

Andi Ship
Daughter of Muriel Kaplan
-Muriel Kaplan

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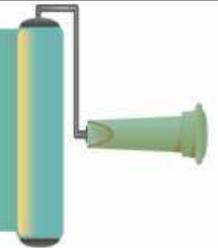
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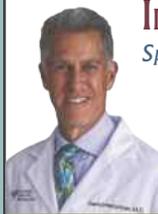
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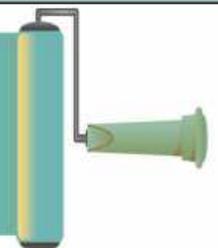
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